Nevada State Climate Office

Photo by B. Hatchett

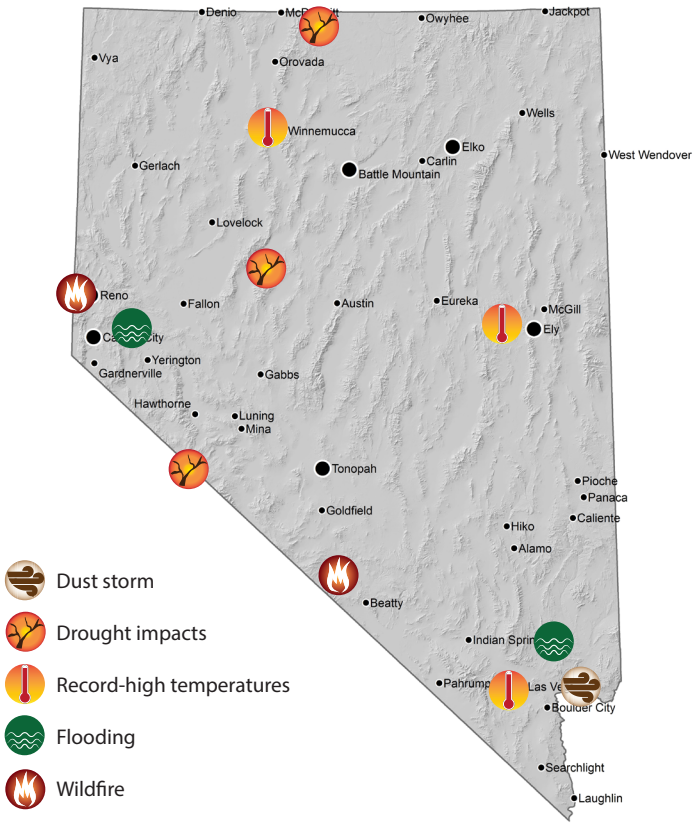
Quarterly Report and Outlook

Informe Trimestral y Pronóstico en línea

www.unr.edu/climate/climate-summary

April - June 2015

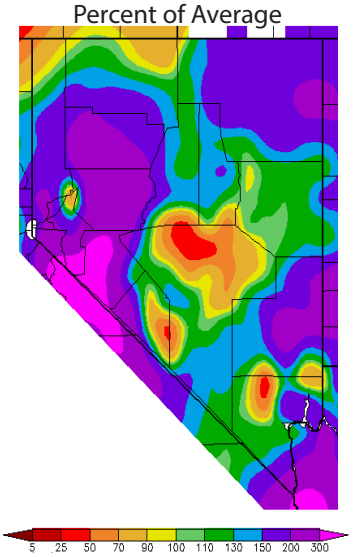
Notable Weather and Climate in Nevada



Above average spring rainfall across much of the state drove some improvement in the four-year drought gripping Nevada. As of June 30, only 11% of the state remained in D4 Exceptional Drought, and parts of Elko county are now just Abormally Dry (D0). Recent rains have been especially helpful in driving "wet and green" range conditions in the northeastern portions of the state. Thunderstorms and heavier rains in June and early July led the National Weather Service to issue flood warnings throughout the state. Despite recent rains, drought remains a concern. Although there are no impacts to regional water supplies, water authorities are calling for conservation.

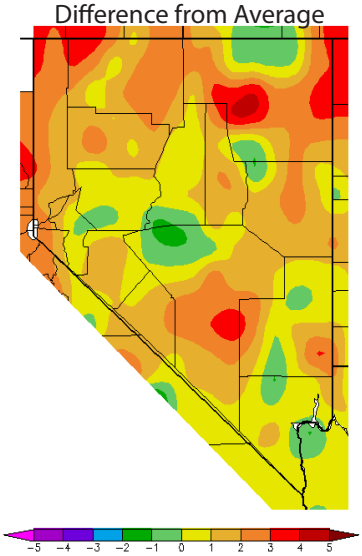
Warm temperatures, the main culprit behind this winter's low snowfall in Nevada and the cause of the "snow drought" across much of the West have continued into spring and early summer. Temperatures were above normal across most of the state. Ely, Reno and Winnemucca recorded their warmest Junes. Warm temperatures may have contributed to the late June White Fir fire that threatened homes near Reno.

April - June Precipitation
Percent of Average



http://www.wrcc.dri.edu

April - June Temperature
Difference from Average



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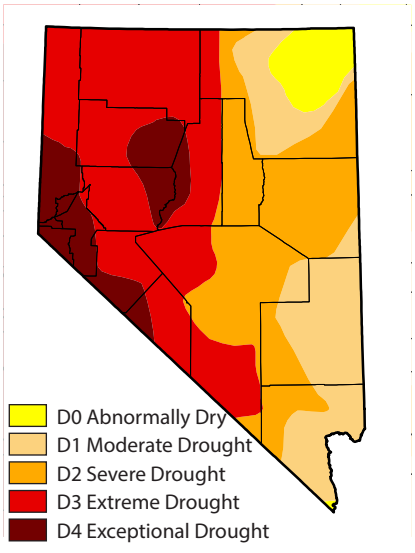
June 30 Drought Monitor



http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu

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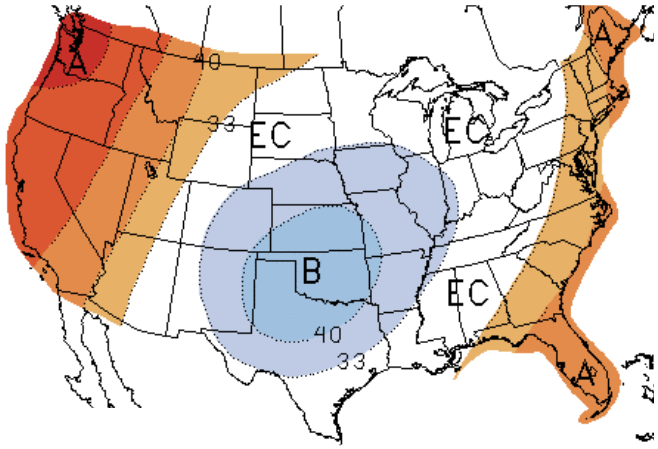
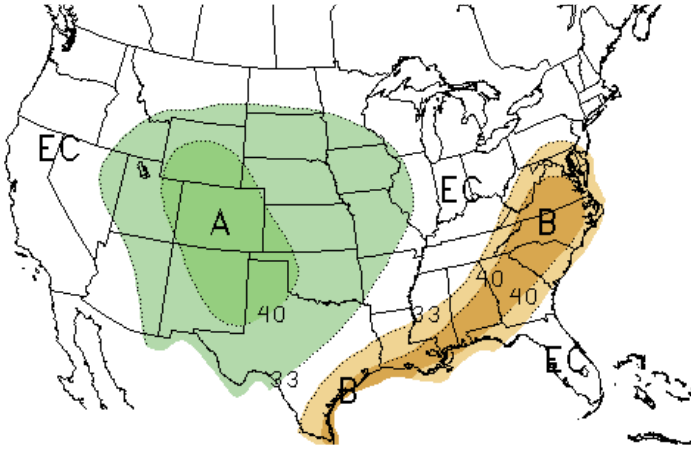
Dep. State Climatologist, Stephanie McAfee (smcafee@unr.edu)

Spanish translation, Chelsea Canon

Three-month outlook

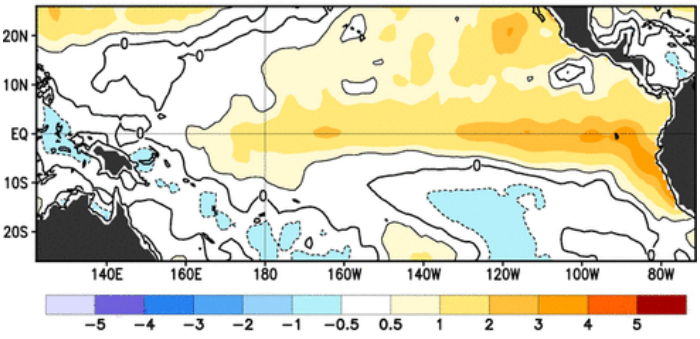




http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

Summer is typically warm and dry in Nevada, but this summer may be particularly hot. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center anticipates a 40 to 50% chance of warmer than normal temperatures across Nevada, with approximately equal chances of normal, above, or below normal precipitation. High temperatures will likely allow drought to continue across the state, but isolated thunderstorms may bring short-term relief.

On the horizon



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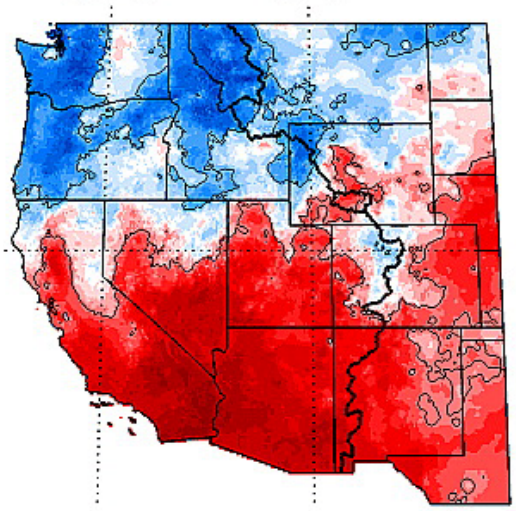
El Niño and Nevada

Nevada stretches across what climatologists call the 'dipole' where the impact of El Niño on winter weather changes. El Niño winters are typically wet in the southern part of the state, but dry in the north. In Las Vegas, El Niño winters were wetter than normal 64% of the time. In Reno, only 45% of El Niño winters were wetter than normal, but 41% were dry. And in Elko, only 27% of El Niño winters were wet. Although the "big" El Niño winters in 1982-1983 and 1997-98 were wet throughout the state, it is difficult to predict what a major El Niño would mean this year, with only two similar El Niño's in the past.

El Niño conditions persist, with ocean temperatures along the coast of Peru nearly 5.5°F (3°C) warmer than normal in the week centered on June 24. El Niño conditions will likely continue through the summer, and there is an 85% chance that they will persist into the winter.

Want more information on ENSO? climate.gov has a great blog. https://www.climate.gov/news-features/department/8443/all



Red areas tend to be wet during El Niño and dry during La Niña. Blue areas are likely to be dry during El Niño and wet during La Niña. Precipitation in light colored areas doesn't have a strong relationship to the tropical Pacific making seasonal forecasting more difficult.

Image from Wise (2010). Spatiotemporal variability of the precipitation dipole transition zone in the western United States. Geophysical Research Letters.